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SECURITY INFORMATION CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PLANS OF CZECHOSLOVAK FORESTRY

Of all the People's Democracies, Czechoslovakia is one of the richest in forest lands. The annual per-hectare growth of forest is 3.45 cubic meters, as compared with an all-Europe average of 1.61 cubic meters. Coniferous trees, especially firs, are most common in Czechoslovak forests. Of the wooded area, 46 percent is in coniferous trees: 26 percent, deciduous; 14 percent, mixed coniferous and deciduous; and the remainder, bushes and undergrowth.

Intensive forestry was formerly practiced in Czechoslovakia. Private owners, however, exploited their forests, with the result that formerly fruitful, forest-protected plains gradually changed into steppes. The amount of wood cut was 40 million cubic meters more than the resources of the land would permit. During the German occupation, the Czechoslovak economy lost 26 million additional cubic meters of wood. In the Czech Provinces alone, the German occupation left behind 100,000 hectares of forest, entirely or nearly devoid of trees.

All necessary conditions for the improvement of the forest economy have been provided in Czechoslovakia. The land reform of March 1948, which limited private land ownership to 50 hectares, has since been extended to cover forest land. Large wooded areas have been transferred to public ownership. Extensive measures are being carried out to improve the growth in newly planted areas and . to avoid soil erosion. Efforts are being made to promote the growth of woods of the types, sizes, and qualities which are most in demand. All areas which are not usable for other purposes are to be taken over for the forestation prógram.

Planting is being carried out along upper reaches of rivers so as to assure the necessary water supply of rivers and to use the new wooded areas as a climatic factor. Protective forest belts are being planted in woodless areas which suffer from drought and soil erosion.

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By 1947, a total of 32,500 hectares had been reforested.

The planned annual cut does not exceed the annual growth. Cutting is to take place according to a selective principle. In nonwooded areas, 76,000 hectares of protective strips are to be planted to conserve moisture and to protect seed crops from wind damage. In 1947, the plan for replenishment of existing forests was fulfilled 118 percent, and for new plantings 116 percent, representing a total of over 40,000 hectares. In 1948, plan fulfillment was 108 percent and 156 percent, respectively, covering 36,000 hectares. The Five-Year Plan for 1949 - 1953 provides for filling out a forest area of 321,000 hectares through the planting of barren areas.

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